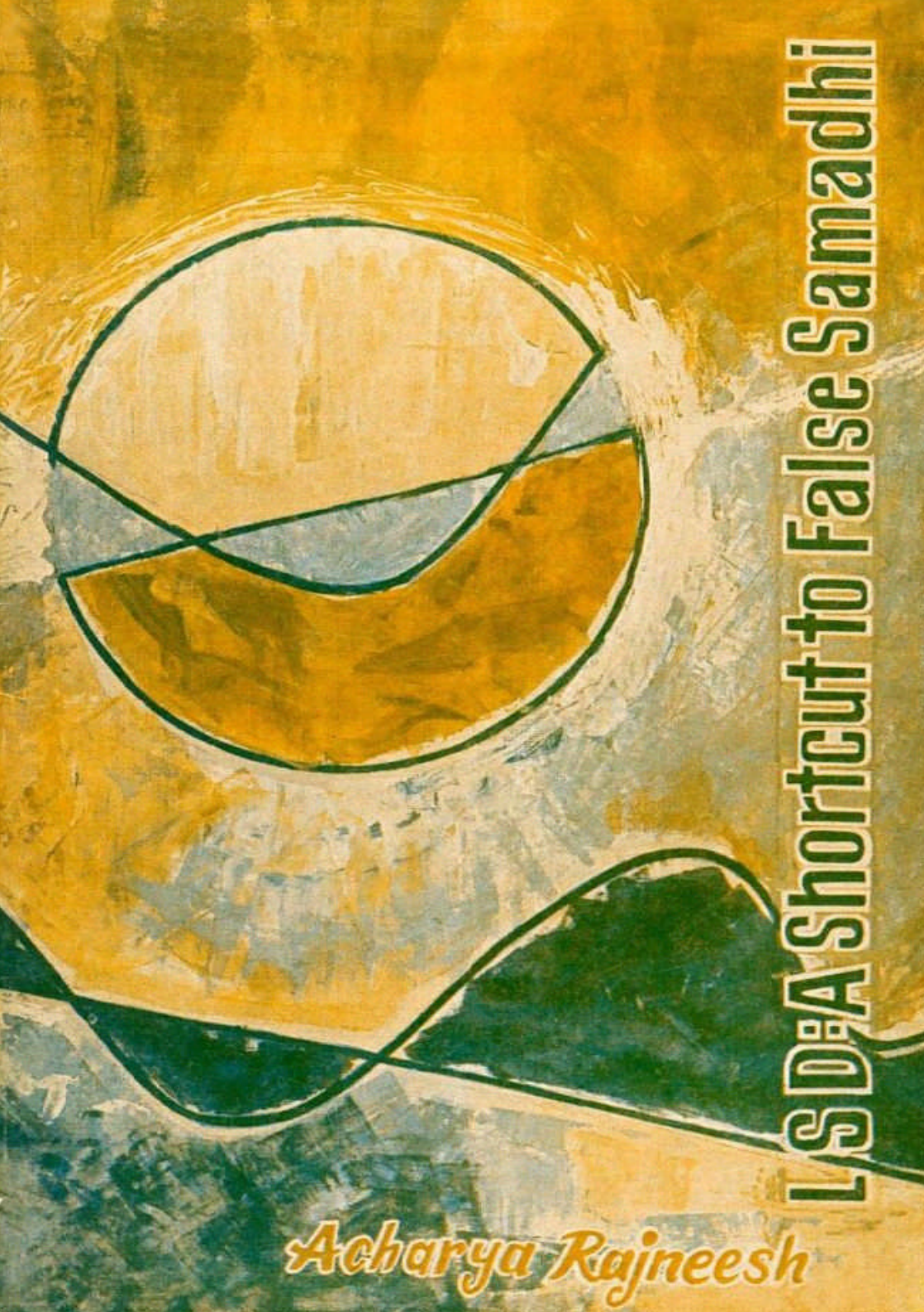
LSD: A Shortcut to False Samadhi
Acharya Rajneesh

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Publisher:
I. N. Shah
Secretary
Jeevan Jagruti Kendra
53, Empire Building
146, Dr. D. N. Road
BOMBAY-1

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First Edition
Copies: 5000
February 1971

Price:
In India - Rs. 2.00
Foreign - $ 0 75
Sh. 6

Printer:
Indian Press (P.) Ltd.
Varanasi-Branch
Varanasi-2

An interview with Acharya Rajneesh
by Ma Ananda Prem
Instructor, Sivananda Ashram, New York, U. S. A.
on 25th. October 1970, Bombay (India)

LSD: A Short Cut to False Samadhi

Ma Ananda Prem: Acharayaji, before asking a question I would like to tell you my experience in meditation with special reference to controlled LSD-experimentation I underwent.

In New York I used to study psycho-analysis. As a result of that, I became a subject in a Government sponsored experiment to study the effects of LSD. In this experiment, I was given seven small doses of LSD, over a period of two years, in a controlled situation. I had learned how to use it to awaken the Kundalini and bring meditation.

Three times I had a certain experience, which I am sure was Samadhi - of the variety with seed, in the sixth body, where I became the whole existence. I would like to describe the experience to you to get your opinion on whether or not what I experienced was true cosmic consciousness.

I sat in a meditative asana, after taking the drug, and meditated. Shortly, thereafter, the Kundalini began coming up the Sushumna from the Muladhara. I concentrated on Agna Chakra, and all the energy flowed there. From Agna, some flowed down to Anahat, releasing various tension knots there. All was very blissful.

I was aware of four colours: the colour saffron, like my clothes, was the main one, and I seemed to be enveloped in it. This was mixed with a yellow colour. Under the yellow was white, still more subtle. And beyond the saffron, without, was a deep blue. Everything seemed to be mainly saffron though.

Suddenly, the Kundalini shot up the spine, very fast and powerful, and there was an explosion in the Agna Chakra. As a result of this, I felt that I became the whole existence, and was one with everything. Or rather, that I had dissolved completely, and the universe, was all there was. This I experienced with complete awareness and clarity such as I never had before.

This state was completely desireless, as all the cravings and desires had melted away. The feeling was one of perfect harmony. There was nothing to be desired, as everything was therein one vast present. It was as if a fog had lifted, and that the curtain of subjectivity called ego, that usually coloured my view of the outer reality, (thus separating me from it), was no longer there. All barriers and separateness between the inner and the outer were gone.

At that point, I stopped meditating because it felt as if I had reached the end of meditation and of bliss. It was thus no longer possible to meditate. My spine seemed melted down to zero tension level. Everything was perfect love, so

there was no longer any craving for love. For the first time, love was not the result of any ego need, as I had no desires or needs any longer. All creation seemed to be a joyous, blissful light-hearted prank. It seemed as if the creation wanted to have fun with itself through its multitudes of energy atoms.

I then got up and walked about, but though my body was walking, it was very clear that I was not the body but the universe. The body seemed to move in front of me and all identity with it was gone.

I remained this way some twelve hours during each of the three experiences. Then the body tensions returned, drawing me back to my former way. However, I had a lot of Kundalini and very blissful meditation for two months after each experiment, such as I have never gotten with any yoga practice. When I do yoga and the usual meditation, it feels as if these practices are taking me in the same direction as these LSD experiences. I see no difference. Also, these experiences seem to match all descriptions of Samadhi with seed, or the Jivanmukta state, that I have ever read.

My questions then are:

1. In your opinion was the experience genuine Samadhi, as I feel it was? If not, how does genuine Samadhi at the sixth

body level differ, other than it being permanent?
2. Is there any harm in occasionally using LSD only for spiritual purposes, in a controlled situation, to help meditation?
3. Is permanent self-realization possible with the help of a chemical like LSD?
4. What do the colours mean?

Acharya Rajneesh: It was not genuine. It was not Samadhi, but a chemical change. The mind can project anything it likes to project - even an unconscious desire of Samadhi! So whatsoever you have known about Samadhi and have read about it, will be projected through the chemical help of LSD. LSD or any other chemical drug is nothing but a help to make the mind more projective. All the hindrances, all the ordinary hindrances are withdrawn. The ordinary reason and conscious mind are withdrawn. You are completely in the hold of the unconscious. But the unconscious itself will not bring Samadhi through LSD. It can only be possible, if the unconscious has been fed with conceptions, colours and vital experiences. Everything that has been put into it can be projected.

If you have not known anything about Kundalini, it is impossible to feel it through LSD. A person who is suffering from any Phobia will project his phobia. A person who is under some suppressed fear will feel the actual phenomenon to take place. So LSD will bring different experiences to different persons.

LSD can only be a help to project whatsoever is in the seed form of your unconscious mind. If it is love, then love will be projected - if it is hatred, then hatred will be projected. LSD is an expanding drug; whatsoever is in the seed form will be expanded into a tree. You could feel Kundalini, you could feel Chakras, and you could feel harmony or the totality, only because these are the seeds already in your unconscious mind. If they are not there, then LSD will not project these.

The projection is because of LSD, but this is not Samadhi. Samadhi comes from your unconscious longing. If you have longed for it then LSD will help you. LSD can be a help to anything unconscious, to be psychically realised, but it is not a spiritual revelation. What you have seen is something which you wanted to realize, projected on the psychic canvas, so it is not Samadhi and it is not genuine. It is neither; and it is nothing else than dreaming. It is just a dreaming phenomenon.

In the night you dream because the conscious barriers are withdrawn. So whatever in your mind is suppressed, desired, longed for, begins to take shape and form and begins to be imagined. But when you are in a dream, you never know that it is a dream. It is so lifelike, it is so real. It seems so authentically real, that you can never conceive within a dream that you are dreaming. LSD is a chemical way of dreaming. It

is not a natural way of dreaming, but a chemical way of dreaming.

So you can see things which you have never seen, know things that you have not known, realise things that you have never realised. But all these realisations are only apparent realisations. They are not real. They are beautiful; they have their own charm, just like nice dreams. But LSD can project a nightmare also. It depends on you, not on LSD. If your mind is hallucinating and is suffering from some untoward images, these will be projected. So there are persons who have seen hell in their LSD trip, and there are persons who have seen demons. It depends on persons. All that chemical drugs can do is to project whatsoever is there to be projected.

So do not mistake it for samadhi and do not cling to such experiences, otherwise they will be obstructions in meditation. You have felt so much in LSD dreams that, when you go in real meditation it is faint. It is not so vital that the feeling is not of such a great upsurge. Compared to your dream experiences meditation will look faint. This will create a depressive mood. You will feel something is being lost. You have known something and this something is not coming through meditation. Then the mind will say, “LSD is better”. And if you go on taking LSD your mind will become less and less meditative. And meditation and its experiences will go on

becoming fainter and fainter. So don't take LSD again.

Ma A. P.: It was just an experiment.

Acharya Rajneesh: Yes it was, but it has made an impact on your mind. And the impact is dangerous because you will always be comparing. The comparison will always be there. The real meditation will seem unreal because unreal has appeared to you as authentic.

Ma A. P.: I can't find the real difference?

Acharya Rajneesh: There are so many things. First, the comparison can never be accurate. It can never be right; because what you have seen in your LSD trip you cannot remember exactly when you are awakened. You cannot remember a dream exactly when you are out of your dream. The dream is again imagined. You add much to it. It is not the same; because when you are out of LSD, you cannot remember it exactly as it was. Only a faint feeling of blissfulness will be there. And now you will imagine the whole experience again. This is not exactly the experience that it was. It can never be. You have a feeling that you have known something. That feeling is illusory and you will again imagine what you have seen, what you have known in the experience itself. But there will be a blissfulness, because of revelation through the chemical drugs.

You are totally relaxed. Your tensions at that moment are withdrawn. They are not non-existential; they are awaiting you to come back. But they are not in focus, so you are relaxed totally. The revelation is so great; you will have a blissful feeling afterwards. You will feel it. The hangover bliss will be there. In this bliss you will imagine again what you have seen, what you have known.

Now this is all imaginary - 90% of it will be imagination and the greater the distance between the experience and the remembrance, the more beautiful, the more blissful, it will look to you. It will become a cherished memory. Now each time in meditation you will compare it. Meditation will be a faint thing in comparison because it is real. It is not a dreamland. The progress is step by step. It is not so sudden. It will never overtake you. You will always be prepared in-between, and the progress is very slow. It will seem slow because now in the real world, there is time; but in LSD experiences or in ordinary dreams, there is no such time, as it exists in our waking hours. So you can dream in a single moment, a dream that will take years together in reality to pass. So in LSD, the thing is sudden. It is so sudden that it overwhelms you. It shatters your total memory. All the tensions are non-existential for the moment. You are relaxed and the cosmic harmony is felt. The barriers are not there. You do not exist as an I; and the world and you have become one. This is so sudden and blissful that you will have a

cherished memory of it afterwards. And you will go on adding to it each time you compare it with reality. It will become more and more beautiful, and the reality will become fainter. So don't compare it.

Firstly, you cannot compare it, because you are in two states of mind and the memory cannot be brought from one state to another. It cannot be brought. Only faint remembrances are there. Secondly, when you compare retro-spectively, it is the same mind which has projected these experiences of LSD, the same unconscious mind, the same medium. You have taken LSD and you are meditating. All the time the unconscious seeds are there which you can project in your meditation. The second thing to be remembered is, don't conceive any pre-formulated, ready-made conceptions. What is to be the result? Don't think about it. To go in meditation is to go in an uncharted sea. You can't know beforehand what is going to happen, and if you know already what is going to happen, it will begin to happen; and it will still be a projection.

You can project in LSD. You can project in meditation also, because the unconscious is the projector. So all the knowledge about Kundalini, all the knowledge of Chakras, all the knowledge that you have of knowing must be thrown out; because your ordinary mind can also project it. When you are meditating, you can project the same thing. The process will be slow because there is no chemical help. It will take longer

time but the phenomena is the same. I am not saying that kundalini is not. I am not saying that chakras are not. I am not saying that there are no experiences. There are, but you must not know beforehand, otherwise you will project them.

You must be completely unknowing. You must be ignorant. There's a basic condition to proceed further, you must not know beforehand. Each thing must be known directly, must be experienced, not taken for granted. Information should not be made knowledge. So throw away all information. Cease to know things and proceed as a vacuum. Proceed in ignorance - you don't know. So everything will be a surprise, everything must be a surprise. If it is not a surprise then you say, "Yes, I have known it, this has happened before."

There is a great possibility of self-delusion, for the mind is deceptive. And the unconscious goes on playing tricks! It is not only in LSD that the deception is possible, even in ordinary meditation, the deception is possible. The unconscious is the same. You must change it. You must make it vacant. It must not be a knowing unconscious. It must be openly vulnerable, ready to face the unknown. Meditation is going into the unknown. So you need a purge, you need a cleansing, you need a complete overhaul.

The unconscious must be cleaned. It must not be pre-burdened - it must not have seeds. Sabeej Samadhi is a Samadhi with seeds. A Samadhi with seeds means a Samadhi with your projections. It is not a Samadhi at all. It is just a name-sake. There is another term - Nirbeej Samadhi, a Samadhi which is seedless. Only a seedless Samadhi is Samadhi, which is authentic because there is nothing to be projected. It is not that you are projecting - something has come to you. You have encountered something. You have known something new, completely fresh, absolutely unknown before, not even imagined; because whatsoever you can imagine you can project.

So knowledge is a hindrance in Samadhi and a person who is a 'knowing-person', can never reach Samadhi. You must not go burdened with knowledge. You must reach the door of Samadhi completely empty handed, naked, vacant, only then the authentic thing happens. Otherwise, you are meditating with the projections. You have been projecting in meditation, and you have been projecting in your LSD experiences. Both are projections.

You must unburden yourself. You must understand this. Forget all that you have known. Don't conceive Samadhi in any way. Do not conceive, do not conceptualize, just go like a child in an unknown country. The language is not known, there is no one acquainted, everything is new and you have no guide book

with you. Only in this way things will begin to happen, which are authentic. Otherwise this will take a long time, and you will go on, encircling yourself and the projection will go on. In this way LSD will be more forceful. LSD will be more vital. LSD will be an experience and meditation will be something faint compared to it. But if you unburden your knowledge, forget all these names - 'Kundalini', 'Chakras', etc., everything, put it aside and proceed just like a child, only then meditation will happen. Otherwise meditation too will be imaginary and a dream.

The difference is very subtle. It is really difficult to know what the difference is, although there is a difference. But one thing could be understood correctly and that is, if things are happening according to your knowledge, then you must not take them seriously; because they can never happen according to your knowledge. They happen to each individual so differently, that no scripture, no 'Guru', can exactly say what will happen. Everything that is being said is just a generalization. To no one it happens exactly like that. The seven Chakras or the 'Kundalini' or the passage, are so different, that they are bound to be different in each individual. So, if things are happening according to a pattern, you must not take them seriously. You are imagining. Things will be different for you. They will never be the same to anyone else. The happening is individual and there are no generalizations.

Everybody's experiences are different and incomparable, and all these things which are being said are generalizations. Generalizations never happen. We are twenty persons here. We can calculate the average age of all here, but no one will be exactly of that age. Average is a myth. It is a generalization. We can have the average height; but no one will correspond exactly with it. We can have average knowledge, but no one may possess it. All the generalizations are myths. They help to formulate things but they don't help to be life-springs. They help to make systems, they help to make scriptures, and they help to make maps. But you can never take a map as a country. You must not. You must have seen the map of India; but nowhere in India will you find it. The map is there, with its formulation. When you enter India, you will never encounter it. It is just a generalization - it helps formulation, but it never helps experience. Rather, it becomes obstructive. So knowledge can be gathered without knowing that knowledge is dangerous. If it is concerned with outward information, it is all right, it makes no difference; but if it is inner experience, it makes a lot of difference. Because the mind projects. It makes a lot of difference.

So you begin your meditation as if you have never heard anything about 'kundalini', 'Chakras' - just be without this information. Make it a point - a first condition to enter meditation - that you are not supposing anything, that you do not know anything, that

you are ready and open to anything that happens. You have nothing to compare. First, your information (your preconceived ideas) must go. You must not cling to them. If you do not cling to them they will go - die. The seed will die. It will burn. But if you cling to it, it will seem like knowledge, it will seem as a help, it will seem as a guide. So don't cling to them and they will become redundant. Then it will not be a living seed. It will not project itself.

Secondly, forget your LSD experiences as dreams, otherwise they will be coming between you and your meditation and comparison will go on. That comparison will be suicidal. It must not be compared, otherwise meditation will cease; and you will lean over to LSD. Any chemical help can only create psychic phenomena. It can never be an authentic realization. Realisation is something to which you have happened. Realisation is not something which has happened to you. Realisation is something in which you have jumped. It is not that something has penetrated into you.

In LSD you go nowhere; you are just where you were. Something happens to you because of chemical changes; because your ordinary mind is not functioning. It has been de-functioned. The ordinary reasoning, the ordinary checks are numbed. They are put off and the unconscious is put on. This has been done through a chemical agent. You are not the controller but the chemical agent is the controller. You are under

its influence. You are not a free agent - now LSD is free in you and LSD will work something in you. It is not that you are working, but you are being worked upon and something will happen to you - not that you have happened to something. Realisation means you have happened to something - you have jumped, you have encountered, you have gone! You are not where you were. You have changed. This change is a conscious change, with full awareness; and the change is your effort. Because you have done it, you have traveled, you have gone to some peak, you can be on the Everest. There are two ways:

1. That you are on the Everest but you will be in your bed. You have gone nowhere; and
2. You can go and the very going is the change.

The very struggle to go upward will change you and the peak will not only be a peak of Everest; but will also be a peak of your efforts. When you have reached the Everest, you have reached the Everest of your will power. In your dreams you have gone nowhere, you exist in the same state, in the same time, only something has happened to you. A dream has come to you. This dream can come in two ways - you can create it through LSD. That is why they look similar. Both ways you are creating it. The unconscious must not be a burden - the unconscious with seeds, with projections, with longings. Only then meditation is possible.

Another difference: when you have taken LSD, your conscious mind has gone to sleep and your unconscious mind begins to work over you. But in meditation, your unconscious is not asleep; rather your conscious is expanding and making your unconscious also conscious. The light of the conscious is going into the unconscious, and a time comes when your whole mind is one. Then meditation has happened. But in LSD the conscious goes to sleep and your unconscious takes charge of you.

Ma A.P.: What do the colours and their sequence mean?

Acharya Rajneesh: They have some meaning but the order is always different for each individual. The order is never the same. But they do have meaning. Colours, perfumes, sounds - everything has a meaning. The first thing that is to be noticed is, the moment you go deep inwards, your each sense has got a corresponding inner organ. We have got an outer sense just like eyes. They see what is without; but when we close our eyes they can see what is within. Every outward experience is stored inward also. The essence of it is stored.

So all your senses have reservoirs of experience in your mind. When you travel inwards, these reservoirs will be met. When you come to the reservoir of colours, you will see beautiful colours which you have never seen with your eyes. But these are essences of all the past

experiences - just like a painter painting a beautiful woman. This is not any particular woman. He has seen so many women. This is the essence of them all. All that he has seen, all that he has known, is being depicted in this one figure. Something is from somewhere and something is from somewhere else. This particular figure is nowhere to be met. It is not imaginary and yet, it is nowhere to be found. It is authentic because it has been taken from experiences and yet, it is just an image. It is real and unreal both.

Our senses have stored all the experiences, not only of this life, but of all the lives that have been lived. These are certain essences in us. The eyes have stored colours, light, etc. Ears have stored sounds, harmonies, silences, etc. All the essences have their store-rooms. Now even Science confirms this. They say that if you can touch a particular brain cell with an electrode, then that particular brain cell will explode. A person falling down may see stars. The shock may create stars, if particular brain cells which store light-experiences are being touched. With an electrode, your memories can be touched. If with an electrode I touch a cell which conserves your memory of childhood, you will again become a child and everything will be replayed on the canvas of the mind.

So when you go inwards, these essential essences will explode; and you will know many things which are unknown in such sure form in

the outward world. Outward world is always impure with substances, but the inward experiences are pure essences. There is no impurity of matter. They are just electrical phenomena. As phenomenon is just energy, it is pure, and nothing obstructs it. It is transparent. Don't take these experiences seriously. They are only meaningful as indications that you are going deep down. But it is only the way, it is not the destination. When you really reach deep down, and in, there will be no experiences - neither of light, nor of sound, nor of anything. Unless all these experiences cease, you cannot transcend the mind. It is the psyche which is displaying its experiences, conserved through endless lives. So first, each person will feel different things because each one is differently oriented, as far as his senses are concerned.

Just two days back someone came, who had no sense of taste; had never known what taste means, so he cannot feel in his inner experiences any feeling of taste. There are persons who are blind, or colour-blind. One person in twelve is colour-blind. A colour-blind person means he cannot see a particular colour. He sees everything else but only a particular colour is not seen by him. Bernard Shaw could not see yellow. He could not make any difference between yellow and green. So he was colour blind as far as yellow was concerned. He could never see yellow in his inner experiences. There was no reservoir of yellow colour. There was no essence of yellow. He had never seen it.

To him it was non-existential. We do not see all the colours. These seven colours are not all the colours. We see only up to these seven colours. Beyond them, we are colour-blind. Below these seven and beyond these seven, there are infinite ranges of colours. We have not seen them, so we will not feel them in our inward journey; because all that is felt in the store-room, is of the without. So, if a musician goes in meditation, he will know sounds which we can ever know. A painter will know colours, which we can never know. If Van Gogh goes into meditation, we cannot conceive what colours he will see, what new combinations he will know! So this too will differ from individual to individual. There can be no order. One thing is certain, when you go deep down in your inner path, things will begin to happen. You will have experiences of colours, sound, perfumes, smells. These are all stored experiences. The whole mind is a storehouse. Every cell is a bundle of experiences ready to explode. Go on, touch it and it will explode! This is meaningful as far as it indicates inwardness. But it will become a hindrance if you cling to it. As the feeling is lovely, the mind will long to cling to it, to repeat it. Then it will be a hindrance to further progress.

A state of mind is to be reached where there is no experience. Rather you say - state of mind with no experience; or you can say - a state of mind with experience of nothingness. Experience itself is the last barrier. One must

come to the point where one IS, and there is no experience. Experience has ceased. Only when experience has ceased, duality ceases. When you are experiencing something, duality is there. You are there, so the experience is there. Something without is there. Even if you experience oneness with the world, this experience is duality.

So in meditation, there will be no experiences. When meditation takes its full flowering, there will be no experience at all. YOU WILL BE - and just being is the experience. Nothing is, except just your being - your existence only. And when the experience is not, the experiencer explodes; because it can exist only as a second polarity to experience. When the object is not, the subject explodes itself. There is no subject, no object. Only then the existential is achieved - only then you can say God IS. You are not, and the World is not - GOD IS. The very ISNESS is God. So these experiences will come, they will come.

Ma A. P.: Acharyaji, I am trying yogic meditation since a long time, but I am not getting any clear and basic result. What is wrong with me?

Acharya Rajneesh: There can be so many reasons. The method used is somewhere wrong; or the way in which it is used is wrong; or neither method, nor the way is wrong, but the unconscious longing behind the method is

wrong. The unconscious must be changed. If you have been using the method for so many years and only getting shallow results, change the method. There are so many methods - one should not cling to one method only. May be the method is not wrong but just not right for you. The method may be all right, but it is not for you. As far as you are concerned, it may be wrong.

So change the method. Change is always helpful. Sometimes one becomes accustomed to the method, and then the experiences will be shallow. Sometimes we become conditioned to a method, and it becomes a shallow affair. Where nothing is new, you go on repeating it as a routine. When it becomes a routine, you will never achieve anything through it. When a method becomes a routine, nothing significant can be achieved. So what I have to say is: if you use this method, the method itself is such that it can never become a routine. It is so disorderly and chaotic, that you can never make it a routine.

All those methods which have disciplined and orderly systems behind them always become routine. You must use a chaotic method, so that you are never settled in it. It always remains something new, something new to be faced each day. So the method I have been talking to you about will help you. It is chaotic. And for the modern mind, no disciplined method can be helpful. For the modern mind is basically

chaotic. It is basically a change in pattern. The old mind was a non-changing, fixed mind. A person was always settled. Today nothing is settled. Two centuries ago a person born a Christian, would die a Christian. Today it is not so. A person born a Christian may become a Hindu. Everything becomes chaotic. His childhood mind is something else, his young mind something else. He may become a communist and then some day, he may come to the Himalayas to meditate.

Today's mind is a mind which is not fixed. It is in chaos. So all old methods which were meant for the fixed minds are out of date. For the chaotic mind a chaotic method is needed. Only then, it can lead to deeper realms. Otherwise the results are bound to be shallow. Once it becomes settled, we will be bored with it. And if you go on prolonging it, it is suicidal. Don't prolong it. Method is for you. You are not for the method – change it.

Ma A.P.: Acharyaji, then I should use only this method for my Sadhana?

Acharya Rajneesh: Yes, you use this method and awareness of breathing. And in a very short period you will feel the change. But you need a chaotic method which should not become a routine.